

**MESSAGE**

It gives me immense pleasure to declare that the Ministry of External Affairs has decided to celebrate the 24th June every year as 'Passport Seva Divas'. It was on this day in 1967 that the landmark Passports Act was enacted, laying the foundation of a sound legal framework for issuance of Passports and other travel documents in the post-independent India.

Today, Passport service is one of the important public services delivered by the Central Government. In 2012, 7.39 million Indian citizens were provided Passport services through the all-India network of 37 Passport Offices and 180 Indian Missions/Posts abroad. The number of passport applications have registered almost a three-fold increase since 2000. In this context, the successful implementation of the Cabinet-mandated Passport Seva Project in 2012 assumes special significance. The Project, which was undertaken to comprehensively overhaul Passport issuance and delivery system, was completed swiftly over two years and by June 2012 the task of setting up of 77 Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs) was accomplished.

The transformational changes have been brought by the Government with the aim to extend Passport services to the citizens by expanding the network for Passport services and ensuring service delivery with greater security, reliability and defined service levels. Some of the other steps to make the Passport Issuance System simpler, speedier and secure include strengthening of the Public Grievance Redressal Mechanism, establishing multilingual National Call Centre operating round-the-clock, creating user-friendly portal, holding Passport Melas and Adalats to reach out to the people, improvement in physical infrastructure in Passport Offices and introduction of new security features in Passport booklets to keep pace with international developments.

On this occasion, I would like to convey my greetings to all the employees of the Central Passport Organisation, officials doing Passport work in Missions/Posts abroad and personnel deployed by M/S Tata Consultancy Services at PSKs. As we observe Passport Seva Divas today, let us work together to make Passport Seva programme a model of good governance and efficient citizen service delivery in the country.

Sd/-
(Salman Khurshid)

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